

GREAT MEADOWS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE
MONTHLY NARRATIVE: September 1993

A. HIGHLIGHTS

B. CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

Weather conditions in September were nearly normal. Temperatures were close to expected averages and precipitation was slightly above average at 5.80 inches for the month. No major storms were recorded however two days of heavy rain accounted for more than half of the months precipitation total.

D. PLANNING

6. Other

Volunteers Gerry Tolman and Adele Reynolds have been working with Refuge staff to organize the fundraising efforts for the aquatic weed harvester for Great Meadows. Gerry and ORP Kennedy attended the Concord Conservation Coffee on September 14 to announce the upcoming fundraising. ORP Kennedy and RM Moses met with NFWF's Lucy Wallace and Gerry Tolman on Sept. 15. ORP Kennedy attended a meeting with Gerry and other volunteers at the home of Adele on Sept. 29

E. ADMINISTRATION

1. Personnel

9/9 RM Moses conducted orientatiuon tour of Monomoy via boat for North Zone Biologist Jan Taylor. Met with North Cairn at the Lighthouse at 6:00 P.M. after checking on group of four fishermen at Powder hole that had been advised of no camping regulation earlier in the day while on tour with Jan Taylor.

9/10 RM Moses and Special Agent Bosco shooting gulls at south tip of S. Mny. Bosco only was shooting. Experimented with new technique of removing loafing BB gulls at extreme S. tip of Is. 18 BB gulls removed in 45 minutes.

9/10 R.O.S. Frisque met with Harvard fire chief, Steve Perry. The discussion centered around pumper truck access to the Nashua river for emergency water needs. Chief Perry asked about the possibility of moving recently established parking barriers closer to the river to permit fire trucks easier access to water at the Oxbow parking lot. The refuge suggested installing a dry hydrant to fill the trucks rather than moving barriers. The hydrant will require necessary permits from the Town of Harvard.

9/11 RM Moses met with CC Times photographer Ron Schloerb who

secured photos to be used with one of North's articles. Traveled out to MNY and was interviewed by North Cairn. Dropped Ron Schloerb off for wildlife photography.

9/13- Manager Moses and R.O.S. Frisque surveyed a grazing and possible timber trespass on refuge property adjacent to the O'Rourke property in Carlisle. Cattle were trespassing on the refuge down to the Concord river prompting calls from other refuge neighbors who could hear or see the cattle from their homes. The area will need to be re-surveyed by the R.O. Maps and Survey Division in order to establish refuge corners again and determine an accurate boundary line. Preliminary work to flag existing corners and lines was completed by Bio. Tech. Burke and will greatly assist the survey crew.

9/14 RM Moses requalified with handgun and shotgun with the Special Agents at the N.H. Fish and Game Department range in Alton NH.

9/15- Manager Moses and R.O.S. Frisque conducted a marijuana surveillance flight with the Army National Guard Counterdrug group. The flight was conducted over Oxbow NWR. A scheduled flight to Massasoit NWR the same day was cancelled due to high wind conditions.

9/15- Section 504 material in the form of a semi-annual report and a Transition Plan update were compiled, typed and submitted to Tom Comish and George Cortez in the Regional Office.

9/16- The Annual Construction Report was compiled and submitted to Realty. The Concord restroom renovation and Solar system rehab. were the only reportable work at the refuge this year.

9/16- The annual Safety Inspection was conducted and the forms submitted to the Safety Office.

9/16 - RM Moses attended the Mass. Environmental Police Officers meeting and outing in Rehoboth, Mass.

9/17-27- ROS Frisque was on annual leave.

9/20 - ORP Kennedy and RM Moses met with Ft. Devens MP, Tom Poole and Mass EPO Merri Walker at the Oxbow P-Lot to discuss coordinated hunting law enforcement for the upcoming season.

9/21 - RM Moses travelled to MNY after work at GRM at 8:00 P.M.

9/22 - RM Moses & ROS Ware attended meeting at the Chatham Coast Guard Station on the subject of John McGrath. Others in attendance included Chatham Harbor Master Peter Ford, Chatham Wharfinger Stuart Smith, new chief of Chatham Station, Lee Multhern and USCG Safety office WO Cliff Monz and Paul Lonardo. Conducted meeting with Chatham shellfishermen from 7:00 P.M. until 8:15 P.M. concerning regulations to be enforced at Powder Hole.

9/22- The Concord restroom handicap retrofit (504 handicap accessibility) was completed in September. A final inspection was conducted by Manager Moses and R.O. Engineer Kurt Otting. The building was approved with a few minor contractor repair items identified and completed the same day.

9/23 - RM Moses attended JHY Governor's Commission meeting at the gatehouse from 2:00 - 5:00 P.M. Inspected completed retrofit work on the gatehouse completed by the contractor for the state. Traveled from JHY to GRM and attended Wild and Scenic River Study Comm meeting at Lincoln, Mass. town hall until 10:45 P.M.

9/24 - RM Moses and Architect Kurt Otting performed final inspection of the Concord unit rest room handicap access retrofit performed by Steve Guarante the "Cry baby Contractor". This project which could have been completed in two weeks at the very maximum took this incompetent individual from April until September to finish. The rest room was closed to the public all summer and the refuge had to incur the additional expense of renting portable chem toilets during the closure period.

9/27 - RM Moses and ORP Kennedy attended "Sound Vision " brain storming session held in the refuge auditorium from 10:00 A.M. - 3:30 P.M. Project Leaders from all the stations involved were in attendance. Meeting was facilitated by Kurt Laffin and Staff.

9/28 - RM Moses and Carl Melberg attended the Waquoit Bay Ad Hoc Committee meeting at Waquoit Bay Nat'l Est. Res. Reserve HQ. Carl was introduced to the group and gave them a presentation on the procedures to be followed for the preparation of the PPP and the EA on the refuge proposal.

9/29 - RM Moses, ORP Kennedy, NFWF Staffer Lucy Wallace met with volunteer fund raising coordinator Gerry Tolman to review the pamphlet and letter on the fund raising effort about to be launched for the Aquatic weed harvester.

9/30 - RM Moses met with Special Agent Chris Dowd at the refuge to view 3 hours of seized video tape on the Mitch Nee case. The Agents have requested that RM Moses testify as an expert witness in this case.

Numerous E.O.Y. purchase orders were filled in Sept., these include:

1. An Athens offset disc to replace the farm disc lost in the Strand barn fire. (Padula Bros)

2. The windshield on the Chevrolet Celebrity was replaced. (Wayside Glass)

3. Two 26" shotgun barrels were picked up for station Remington 870 shotguns. An Old Town 15 ft. canoe was also received. Both items

were purchased from Lew Hortons Sporting Goods in Framingham.

4. Twenty (20) cases of 12 ga. shotgun shells were received from Federal Cartridge.

4. Volunteer Program

Fifty MBA students from Babson College volunteered three hours each to trail rehabilitation projects at both the Concord and Sudbury Units of Great Meadows. This was part of a community service program that Babson has initiated for their new students.

Refuge volunteers were essential in getting out the newsletter again this quarter. Mary and Jon Varteresian delivered the Messengers from the R.O., and six volunteers folded at stuffed over 1,800 Meadows Messengers the next day.

6. Safety

Bio. Tech Burke completed his rabies vaccination series in September. A total of three injections were required spanning a four week time period beginning in late August.

Hazardous material stored at the refuge was consolidated and delivered to a Sudbury collection center on Sept. 18. Bio. Tech. Burke loaded numerous boxes of material including oil based paints, herbicides, and dated petroleum products into a station pick up truck and delivered the material for proper disposal.

Maintenance Mechanic, Sears injured his right hand while assisting the Minuteman National Historic Park with a project. The laceration was bandaged at the site and did not require further medical attention. A DI-134 and CA-2 were completed and submitted as required.

The GRM staff attended fire extinguisher training on Sept. 16.

F. HABITAT MANAGEMENT

2. Wetlands

Water levels in the floodplain and in the impoundments were relatively low throughout the month, however temporarily exposed mudflats and portions of the floodplain were inundated by months end. Low water levels, particularly during the beginning of the month provided valuable shorebird staging and feeding areas. Seasonally low water levels through the summer provided good growing conditions for wild rice and variety of other food and cover plants for waterfowl and other wildlife. Seed maturation and marginal inundation of these same food plants near the end of the month provided decent feeding opportunities for waterfowl and some

passerines.

G. WILDLIFE

2. Endangered and/or Threatened Species

Ospreys were consistently noted during the month as were Northern Harriers. Both species were frequently seen at both the Sudbury and Concord river floodplains as well as the Concord impoundments. A second or third year bald eagle was observed at the Concord unit on 9-24.

Bio Tech. Burke observed a migrating peregrine falcon over Wash Brook.

Several Blandings turtles were observed at the Concord unit.

3. Waterfowl

Weekly waterfowl counts which were initiated at mid month documented refuge use by gadwall, pintail, green winged teal, blue winged teal, wood ducks, mallards, black ducks, and Canada geese. Numbers of birds increased through the month but species diversity did not.

The beaver flowage on the Strand property was heavily used by dabbling ducks in September. Nearly full grown wood duck broods, and black duck broods indicated successful breeding by these birds in the local area.

On 9-10-93 Bio. Tech. Burke accompanied State Biologists Dick Burrell and H. Heusemann on a second nighttime airboat banding operation in the refuge impoundments. The effort produced 168 wood ducks, 4 mallards, 4 bwt, and 2 gwt. Refuge floating traps produced 21 wood ducks, 2 mallards and one moorehen. Refuge floating traps were pulled at mid-month.

4. Marsh and Water Birds

Low water levels during much of the month invited many lesser yellowlegs, least sandpipers and sanderlings to the impoundments and exposed/shallow flooded mudflats along the river edges. The shorebirds were particularly active on the dense mats of water chestnut and bladderwort.

6. Raptors

Raptor numbers were significant in September. On 9-17 Bio. Tech. Burke observed numerous raptor species including sharp shinned hawks, coopers hawk, northern harrier, red shouldered hawk, red tailed hawk, osprey and a turkey vulture. Sharp shinned and coopers hawks were seen almost daily.

Migrant raptors observed include a broadwinged hawk, kestrels, and a peregrine falcon. Screech owls and great horned owls were heard

regularly in September.

7. Other Migratory Birds

10. Other Resident Species

Bio. Tech. Burke extricated a whitetailed deer from a three strand barbed wire fence which was illegally strung on the refuge. The deer sustained numerous superficial lacerations and was released in good condition.

H. PUBLIC USE

6. Interpretive Exhibits/Demonstrations

An agreement was reached with Wilderness Graphics regarding the correction to the custom interpretive panel we ordered. Wilderness Graphics will redo the work at no charge.

7. Other Interpretive Programs

The Spring Wildlife and Nature Arts and Crafts Show and Sale was scheduled for May 14, 1994.

Volunteer Diana Bronner presented an evening slide program on the Wildlife of the Galapagos on Sept 29. Approximately 40 people attended.

17. Law Enforcement

RM Moses and ORP Kennedy met on Sept. 20 with Ft. Devens law enforcement personnel, a state Environmental Police Officer, and Ft. Devens biologist regarding the upcoming hunting seasons.

I. EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

2. Rehabilitation

All refuge floating signs were rehabilitated and placed in the Sudbury and Concord rivers. Vandalism occurred on one sign near the route 20 bridge. The sign was retrieved and repaired and replaced to its original location.

The oxy/acetylene tanks were returned to Nanco and exchanged for smaller portable tanks which the station purchased this year.

The Great Meadows directional sign was relocated at Water Row and Lincoln Lane. Two 4 inch steel posts were installed and filled with concrete in an effort to protect the sign from vandalism.

Quarters- The acrylic bubbles for the Wasco skywindows at the residence were replaced in September. The old bubbles were badly cracked and leaking. The residence carpets were also steam cleaned.

Sears and Burke spent numerous hours preparing the station trails for volunteer work on Sept. 11. Nearly 140 cu.yds. of wood chips were placed on the trails using the tractor, ATV and garden carts prior to spreading by volunteers.

Stone dust was also delivered to the switchback steps on the Weir Hill trail and spread in September and October.

3. Major Maintenance

4. Equipment Utilization and Replacement